ISSN 0712-7774

$2.25 USA • $2.75 CANADA • £1.25 UK

CEREBUS

mothers & daughters

157
APR

NOTE • FROM • THE PRESIDENT

Okay, it's March 30 and time to bring you all up to date on what's been going on. After the two slow store signings in Pittsburgh, I was definitely starting to panic about the Tour (I'll admit it). By the time last issue came in with the Note from the President about the up-and-down of the Pittsburgh stop, everything was moving into high gear again and all of my worrying looked very funny in retrospect.

Steve Bolhafner really delivered for us on the media side in St. Louis, starting with a live radio interview on the local CBS radio affiliate, KMOX, followed by a photo session and lengthy interview with St. Louis' primary alternative newspaper, *The Riverfront Times* and then another radio interview with Chuck Lavazzi for his *One Step Beyond* radio show on KDHX. Then Howard Yang did an interview for the Washington University student paper *Student Life* and then a lengthy interview (live again) on the Washington University radio station KWUR which gave us barely enough time to zip across town in time for the first signing at Steve Koch's *Comic Headquarters*. A big turn-out, and Steve and Gary and Jim had practically turned the store into a Cerebus outlet for the occasion; a big wall display of back issues and all of the reprint volumes displayed prominently. I couldn't believe it when they told me that it was the first time they had had a signing in the store. The next day, *Fantasy Books* had a good enthusiastic turn-out. Steve Bolhafner pointed out that almost everyone at this stop was a long-time reader, dating back to the late seventies. Carol Denbow definitely cops the prize for biggest turn-out so far with the *Star Clipper* appearance and her best ever Saturday's business (as you can tell, by now, I just love it when that happens). Carol is one of the industry's great experimenters; dedicated to making the good stuff sell better and keeping the garbage confined to its own little area. The female Brian Hibbs. Seriously. There is hope after all. The Great Eastern Convention was very well attended; we sold every one of the reprint volumes that we brought with us and almost all of the Diamondback decks. I even found time to see the St. Louis Blues kick shit out of the Minnesota North Stars, thereby keeping the Leafs' play-off hopes alive. Throughout all the driving hither and yon, Steve Bolhafner conducted his own on-going interview for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* which should be out by now. Steve, I can't thank you enough for all of your help with St. Louis; from hand-picking the sponsor stores from over thirty available candidates (!), to driving me all over the place, to setting up the most thorough list of media interviews . . . performance above and beyond Aardvark duty.

★★★★★★★★★★

Los Angeles had me more worried than any of the other stops. My confidence wasn't helped by Annette Swanberg informing me that she had turned up no, zip, nada, bupkiss in the way of Los Angeles interviews. Not altogether unexpected in a city with the largest population of world-famous people, but still not something to inspire great waves of self-confidence. Add to that the fact that Great Eastern Conventions has had the hardest time making progress with their LA shows and there was the definite smell of disaster in the air. Even Bill Liebowitz had proposed a very informal get-together at the *Golden Apple* ("Have A Beer With Dave") and made no secret before-hand that he thought a six-pack might do the trick (c'mon, now, be honest Bill). I got to the store right on time and there was a genuine, for real, no kidding line-up and I was busy signing autographs and doing sketches for three hours. I thought my arm was going to fall off, but I was ready to stay there til midnight if necessary to make sure everyone got a sketch and an autograph (or twenty). Because that was the first stop where I thought, "Heyl, *We* did this." It was just us Cerebus people. I mean Bill even asked at one point "How did you all hear about Dave coming here?" and then he went down a short list of places that the appearance had been mentioned and you all just sort of shuffled around looking at each other. Finally, one of you (God bless your soul) said "How many people read about it in Cerebus?" and every hand went up. Thanks, Tony. Thanks, Jim and Jim and the several Steve's and Ken and the off-duty LAPD cop and Cathy Hill (who's sending me a fantastic Cerebus/ Mad Raccoons jam piece for one of the later stops) and all you Los Angeles area Cerebus people.

The day before the convention, I didn't have anything to do and I had just finished the new *Whistler* biography and the LA Kings weren't playing Calgary until one in the afternoon, so I thought I'd walk around the neighbourhood of the hotel and I ran across a comic shop right next door. Prepared for the worst, I went back to the hotel, drew a sketch of Cerebus in one of our copies of *Church & State* volume two we had for the con and decided I was going to sign it for whoever was working at the counter, take a quick look around to find wherever they had two copies of the latest issue and then split.

They had a whole wall display of Cerebus back issues because I was in town! Seriously! And a bunch of bi-weeklies and the latest issue. I ended up autographing a bunch of books and talking to Bruce (the guy at the counter) and a former employee (comic store burn-out) for about an hour. The owner, Alan Williams had a framed Cerebus sketch from the 1981 San Diego Con in his display case with a Not For Sale sign on it. The convention attendance was twice as much as Fred usually gets in Los Angeles and, again, we sold all of the reprint volumes we brought with us only this time they were gone by mid-afternoon. For some reason I was exhausted by noon, and I was barely able to mumble answers to any of the questions. Probably just worn down by all the pre-Los Angeles anxiety. It definitely felt as if we had turned a corner of some kind.

★★★★★★★★★★

Watch out, Denver and Chicago. Here we come.

PRINTED IN CANADA

CEREBUS

NO. 157 **APRIL 1992**

DAVE SIM
President

GERHARD
Vice-President

LINDA BERZINS
Typesetting

MOTHERS & DAUGHTERS
a novel

•

BOOK ONE
(Cerebus 151 to Cerebus 162)
Flight

•

BOOK TWO
(Cerebus 163 to Cerebus 174)

•

BOOK THREE
(Cerebus 175 to Cerebus 188)

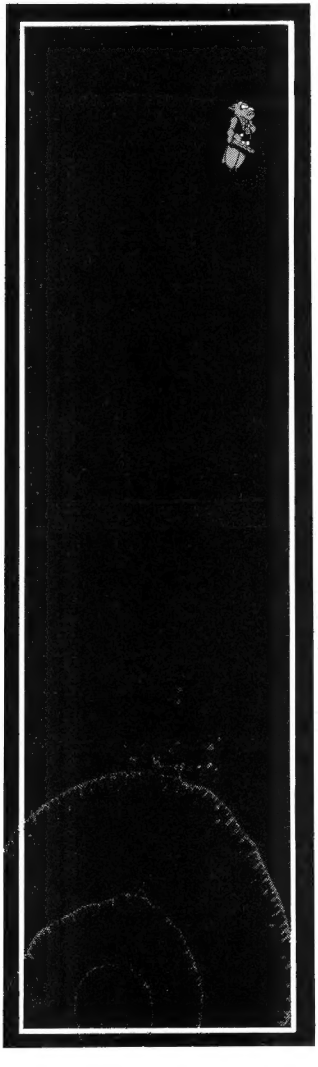
•

BOOK FOUR
(Cerebus 189 to Cerebus 200)

CEREBUS IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY AARDVARK-VANAHEIM INC. P.O. BOX 1674 STN. C, KITCHENER, ONTARIO, CANADA N2G 4R2

ALL CONTENTS © 1992 DAVE SIM.

PRINTED IN CANADA BY **PRENEY PRINT & LITHO INC.**, WINDSOR, ONTARIO.



Congratulations.

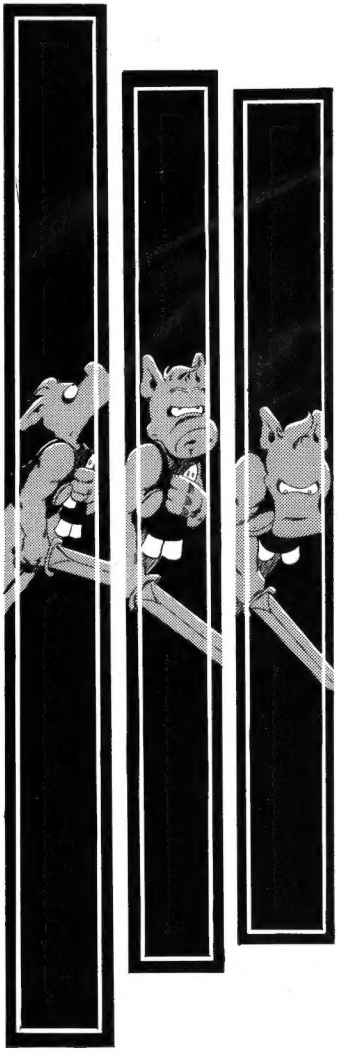
Through your single-mindedness of purpose, you have achieved your goal and have now arrived at "up". That is to say, you have arrived in the Eighth Sphere which, technically speaking, is as "up" as one can get in the Seventh Sphere.

Aye. Cerebus has been here before.

If you are referring to our curious little exchange at the time of your "kidnapping", no. In point of actual fact, that was not the Eighth Sphere. Rather, it was something of a "suburb" of the Seventh Sphere. Without going into great and extraneous detail, it is as I described it at the time; an environment supplied by individual imagination. A series of portents and omens (most of them thoroughly discreditable) had suggested the possibility (however remote) of your emergence as a "key player" in the hurly-burly hustle and bustle of our many-hued multiverse. Quite frankly, I was curious to see what manner of environment your Essential Self might fashion if given the opportunity. If you will recall, you contrived a sort of endless gray slide for yourself, both incomplete and transitory, at the conclusion of which, you vanished without a trace into a small patch of gray bubbles, leaving no discernible change through your passing, suffering neither real nor ostensible ill-effects in the process. I will admit that this made your tenure as Prime Minister a more than slightly predictible anti-climax, but then a satisfied curiosity is the poorest bedfellow of an exquisite anticipation.

Huh?

In the Eighth Sphere we don't provide translations for the slow-witted, I'm afraid. "Up" comes without attendant footnotes. Grasp what you can and try not to breathe through your mouth so much. Apropos nothing; might one hazard a guess as to the reason for your reclined head, pointed toes and arched back? Dare one suppose that you are still in pursuit of "up"?



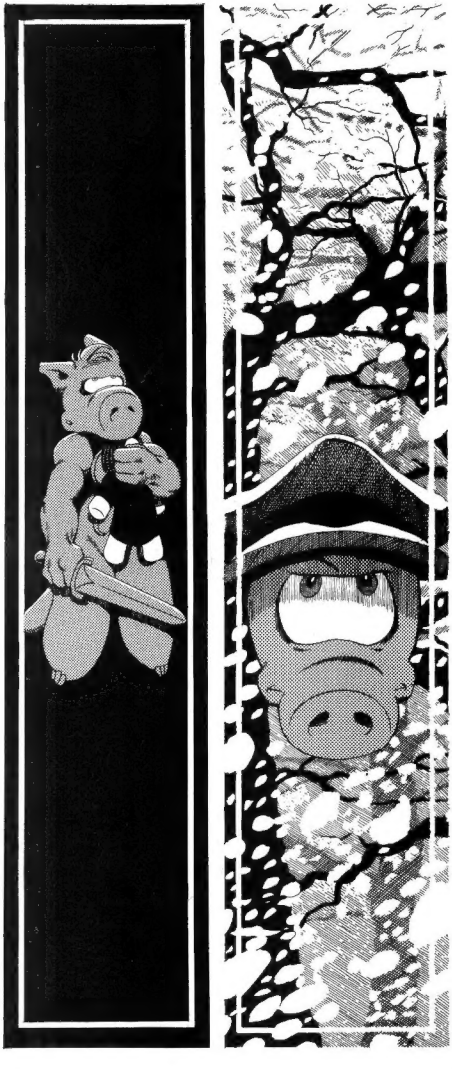
Aye.

Well, you can spare yourself the potential dislocation of important muscle groups. It is a characteristic of the Eighth Sphere that there is no "down" or "up". There is only eternal darkness in all directions, without interruption or signpost. If you will attempt to look "down" you will notice that there is no vital impression remaining of the Seventh Sphere to mark, for you, even a delusion of progress. This, to put it as succinctly as possible, and at the risk of being redundant, is as "up" as you get.

Okay, so what's the Eighth Sphere ***for****, then?*

For? An interesting — albeit moronic — question. You might as readily ask what you are "for". Or against if it comes to that. Each person's Eighth Sphere is his own, to have and to hold, the repository of all he has been, all he is and all he will be. You can relive any point of your life. A second can be experienced for a decade. Or you can skim the sum of your cradle-to-grave existence in the blinking of an eye. You can pursue a single emotion; witness the nativity of one of your beliefs, watch it take root, listen to it evolve over years, betrayed, transmogrified and indicted; defended, revived and reprieved in your own words. You can witness its expiration or see it outlive you. For the literal-minded there is no proof, save by example, so let's start with an easy one until you get, as they say, the "hang" of it.

"Joy"



Here's one your earliest experiences with the emotion of Joy. You're a mere lad of eight summers and you're on your way home after an industrious afternoon of stealing baked goods found cooling in open windows. You have just finished consuming a delectable cherry pie, its filling enhanced with the unexpected tartness of lemon juice. You are passing through a grove of lilac trees. It is late spring and a warm wind suddenly springs up from the south, shaking the blossoms of the surrounding trees with a rush of sound like a wave on the ocean, so that the cream-white and tiny petals fill the air around you like some brilliant, magical snowfall as far as the eye can see. There is no one threatening you, no one taunting you about your appearance or your clothing and, for the first time, a warmth and an inner peace descends over you. You are relaxed and happy. You stand there, entranced and inwardly pleased, for several uninterrupted minutes.

Moving ahead a few years, we come to the (ahem) be-heading of your first Borealan. Not a cause for Joy among even the least respectable persons of my acquaintance, but, then, the Eighth Sphere is a mere catalogue of impressions and memories and nothing more; passing no judgement; offering self and self alone for each individual's examination. You had practised with your sword in secret for weeks against the day when you would challenge this hirsute and haberdasherial monstrosity to a, as the cliche-infested might have it, battle to the death. As your sword cut smoothly through artery and bone; as a spray of hot blood splattered against your face

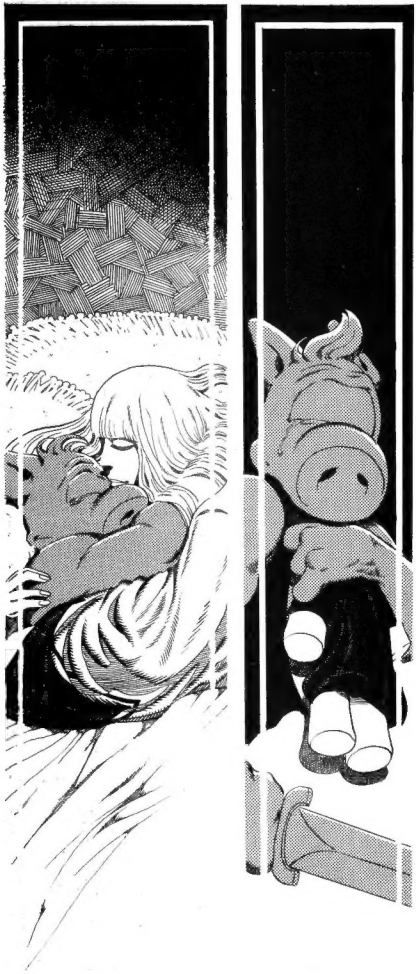
(Good Lord I Think I'm Going To Be Sick)

and a triumphant cry arose from the surrounding spectators, your mercenary "chums" (indistinguishable as they might be from your opponent to the careless and civilised eye), a great weight of fear lifts from your shoulders like a bird taking wing and your spirit soars within you.

A few years further on you have deserted your current military commitment and have trudged through trackless wilderness for many days, hunting small game for your supper, sleeping in the hollows of trees, in constant terror that you are being tracked and will be made to suffer the consequence of your desertion. The purpose of your journey is to stand upon the Wall of Tsi and gaze into the lands of the T'Capmin Kingdoms. It had been one of your father's favourite expressions whenever you had expressed an inkling of ambition or evinced an interest in any sort of achievement; "Sure and then you'll stand on the Wall of Tsi." The risk you had undertaken was considerable and the impediments you faced virtually insurmountable. Now, many days later, without a coin in your pocket or notion of what the next day might bring, you breathe deep the biting north wind, redolant of evergreen and wood-smoke and for the first time you feel a sense of total personal achievement.

And then, the most Joyous moment in your principally joyless existence . . .

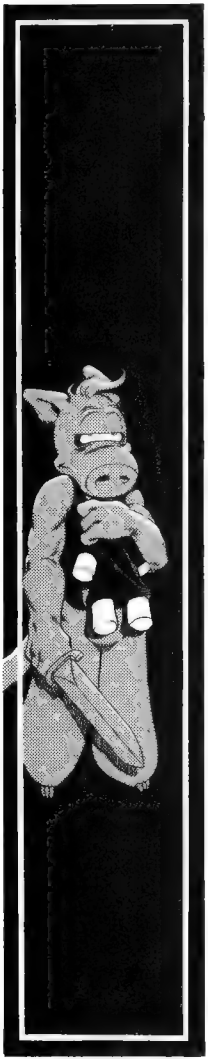
I WILL TAKE YOUR ABRUPT DISAPPEARANCE AS A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN MY "KNOW-IT-ALL, WISE-GUY-EVIL-TWIN" THEORY...
I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO DO MRS. THATCHER.
DON'T THINK FOR ONE MINUTE THAT I DON'T
MRS. COPPS?
BENEATH THE RED MARCHES, THE COMPLETE CHANGE IN PREVAILING OPINION IS VIRTUALLY UNIVERSAL AND INSTANTANEOUS... THE CLAN ELDERS AND THE CREAM OF PICTISH MANHOOD TURN -- WORDLESSLY -- FROM THE SCENE OF FRET MAC MURY'S DEMISE, AND BEGIN STRIDING PURPOSEFULLY, AND AS ONE, IN THE DIRECTION OF THE LONG-SEALED ARMOURY...
"THE SEMI-AUTOMATIC CROSS-BOW FACTORY WILL GO IN THAT BUILDING OVER YONDER..."
"RIGHT NEXT TO THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING CEREBUS"



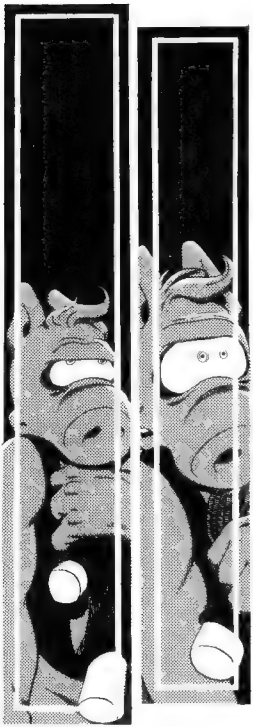
The first night you spent with Jaka; when she had agreed without hesitation to accompany you; to be your life's companion. You had dozed briefly, drained by the excitement of that most enchanting day's events. And then you awoke to find her looking at you. Without a word, she had taken you into her arms. There was the light, sweet scent of perfumed soap on her skin and in her hair; the reassuring pressure of her arms enfolding you; and the delicate warmth of her breath on your eyelids.

For the first time in your conscious memory; for the first time in fact, since you were a baby; a single tear, full and warm, rolled down your right cheek and you fell into a very deep and entirely dreamless slumber . . .

YOU'RE TRYING TO TAKE OVER THE ONE TRUE ASCENSION!
YOOOO HOOOO
OTHER EEEILLF
COME OUT COME OUT WHEREVER YOU ARE.



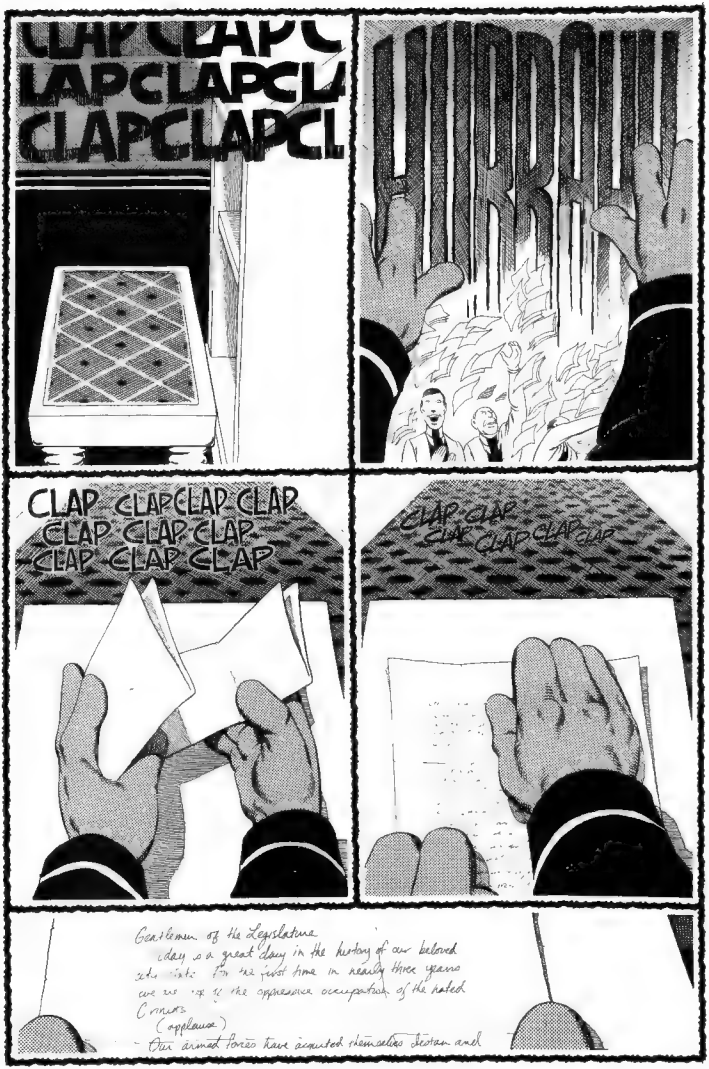
You can feel the drift, can't you? The momentum and the tide of tracing a single emotion through the days of your life. It is a rare gift and a momentous achievement, The Eighth Sphere. And you are not limited to those experiences merely past or simply present. Your future resides here as well. How wonderful a discovery for someone like yourself, don't you think? You seek "up", but "up" (all things considered) is really a linear projection; a solitary and finite thread. How much richer a tapestry might serve you when "up" is woven in intricate patterns of "forward", of "beyond" — when your progress is not limited to displacement or relocation; when transcendence itself is within your grasp. Experience now, the greatest and most enduring Joy of your adult life a few years hence.

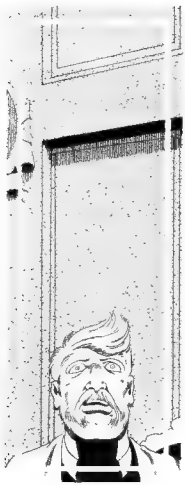


A word of caution. Remember, what I said about a satisfied curiosity for it is nowhere truer than in the exploration of one's future. Days yet to be should be sampled and savoured in trace amounts. The demarcation between curiosity-seeker and lotus-eater is paper-thin.

Regard.

CLAP CLAP CLAP
CONGRATULATIONS MR PRIME MINISTER
BRAVO!
BRAVO!!
YOU'VE MADE US ALL VERY PROUD TO BE LEGENDS TODAY, SIR!
CLAP CLAP CLAP


CLAPCLAPCL
LAPCLAPCL
CLAPCLAPCL
CLAP CLAPCLAP CLAP
CLAP CLAP CLAP
CLAP CLAP CLAP
CLAP CLAP
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
Gentlemen of the Legislature
today is a great day in the history of our beloved
state. for the first time in nearly three years
we are free of the oppressive occupation of the hated
Crimeans
(applause)
- Our armed forces have liberated themselves thereby and



You're not supposed to react with your conscious mind in the Eighth Sphere. It creates alternate time-lines, parallel realities and other manifestations of sloppy psychic house-keeping.

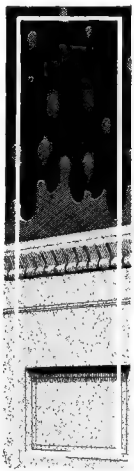
It isn't Cerebus' future Cerebus dies alone, unmourned and unloved.

Ah. The Judge.

Aye

In a way, I'm quite surprised that you would take him at his word, considering that he isn't Tarim and that the Moon hardly qualifies, even among the most liberal-minded, as Vanaheim. In another way, I'm not surprised at all; you're the sort of fellow who would believe a street-corner horoscope before he would believe his own heart.

There's no ceiling on the Legislature



For you? No. Are you sure you don't want to stick around and read the speech?

Nay

You get a twenty minute standing ovation at the end.

Nay

Well, what about Blakely's speech where he hails you as the greatest warrior/statesman lest has ever seen, apart from (ahem) Suenteus Po himself.

Nay

No. Don't tell me. Let me guess.

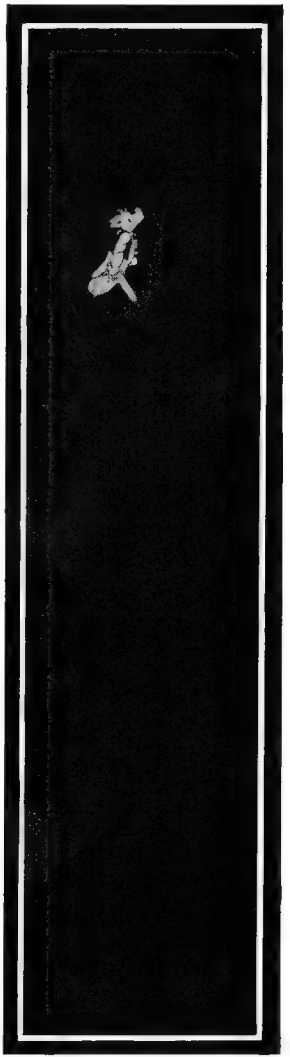
"Up"?

Aye

Everyone tries to distract Cerebus. If it isn't you, it's Lord Julius and if it isn t Lord Julius, it's Astoria Or Elrod. Or someone who wants to paint a picture of Cerebus. Any time Cerebus decides to do something, someone comes along and gets Cerebus to do something else. The more people Cerebus is in charge of, the more distractions there are and the less Cerebus does what Cerebus wants to do and the more Cerebus does what someone else wants Cerebus to do. Well, Cerebus isn't in charge of anyone any more, so Cerebus is going to do what Cerebus set out to do. Cerebus is going up and Cerebus is going to find the top of the Eighth Sphere or the Ninth Sphere or the Tenth Sphere or whatever and wherever it is. Up is up, even if everything else is black. It's like climbing a mountain. You know you're at the top when you run out of mountain and until you run out of mountain, you keep climbing.

Well said. Well said, indeed. For a fellow whose progress to date might most flatteringly be described as "meager" this smacks of insight writ large. The most distinctive trait of the fool is his submission to distraction and diversion and an abiding faith that they are inescapable matters of course. His quite tedious refrain; "life is what happens when you're making other plans." Conversely, it is a cornerstone of wisdom that obstacles exist to be bypassed; and where that isn't possible they are to be overcome or eliminated entirely. "The more worthwhile the Road, the more seductive will be those paths divergent from it."

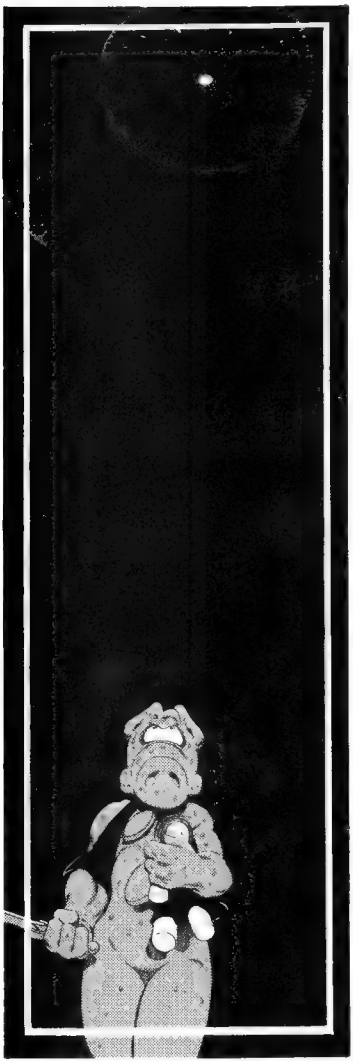
"Up", then, Young Cerebus. The final hurdle of your Eighth Sphere has been surmounted and a new reality beckons.



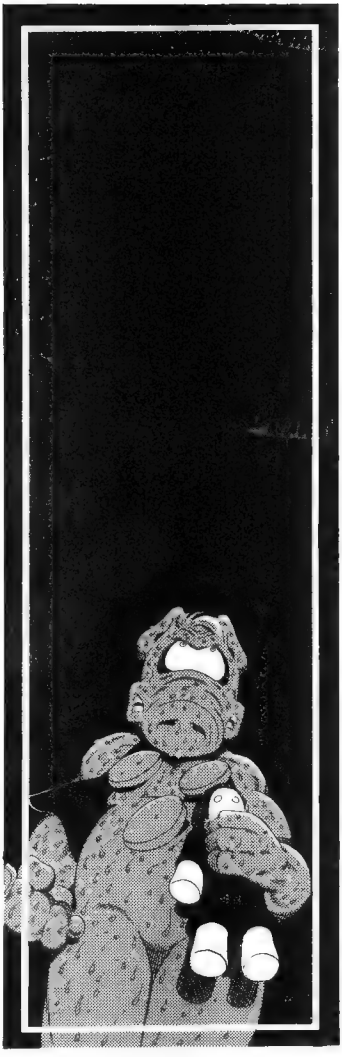
That new reality is a story. Or, rather, THE story. The story that was ancient when the multiverse itself was young. Parts of the story will seem as familiar to you as your own name. It begins (as do all things) with awareness. What You Seek is above you; it is indistinct and shapeless, but also irresistible. Your progress toward it is sure and steady; your urge to proximity an article of faith and your belief in the accessibility of What You Seek unshakeable and profound. You are of it; and it is of you. As you rise toward it, faster and still faster, its shape resolves into a tiny pin-point of light, surrounded by a great and terrible "other-ness" for wont of a better definition. Your Curiosity focuses into Desire and Desire into a nameless Hunger for What You Seek.

As you draw closer to it, a new perception of its attraction occurs to you. You are moving toward it at a quite un-natural speed and you find it almost beyond your power to slow your for-ward momentum. Resisting that pull with every fibre of your being, you retreat until the surrounding darkness is all that there is and What You Seek is once more indistinct and without form.

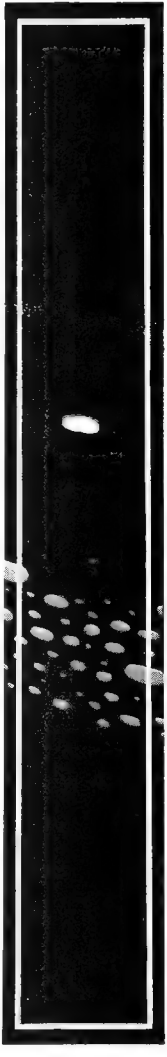
And there you consider the problem at hand for a very long time, indeed.

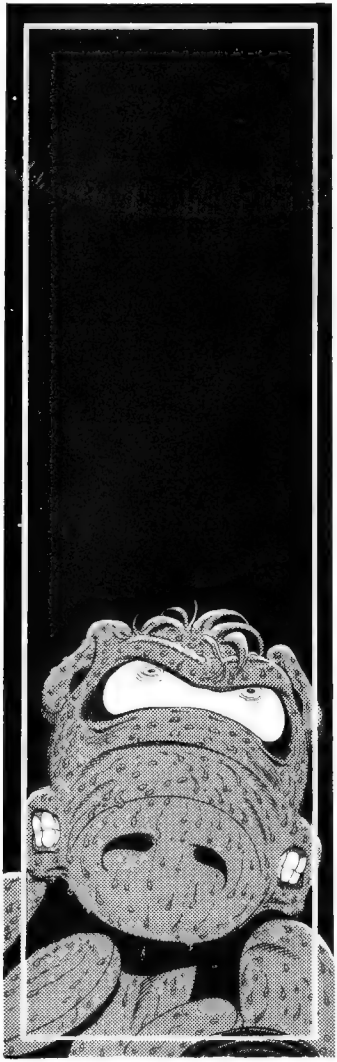


At last you move forward again. Slowly. Cautiously. Resistant to the other-worldly attraction which attempts to draw you to it, like iron-filing to magnet. In this new reality, this story, you have a far greater control over your physical presence than you had previously. Consciously, you begin to loosen the bindings between those particles and fragments of which you are constituted. You double, then triple, then quadruple your own mass, reducing your density, pushing relentlessly, carefully, forward; your muscles taut and straining to maintain control. Size is the game here. That Which You Seek is large and it is that size which exerts to much force on you. The pin-point of light enlarges and becomes a flattened disc. Shimmering halos of energy become visible around it. You make yourself larger still.

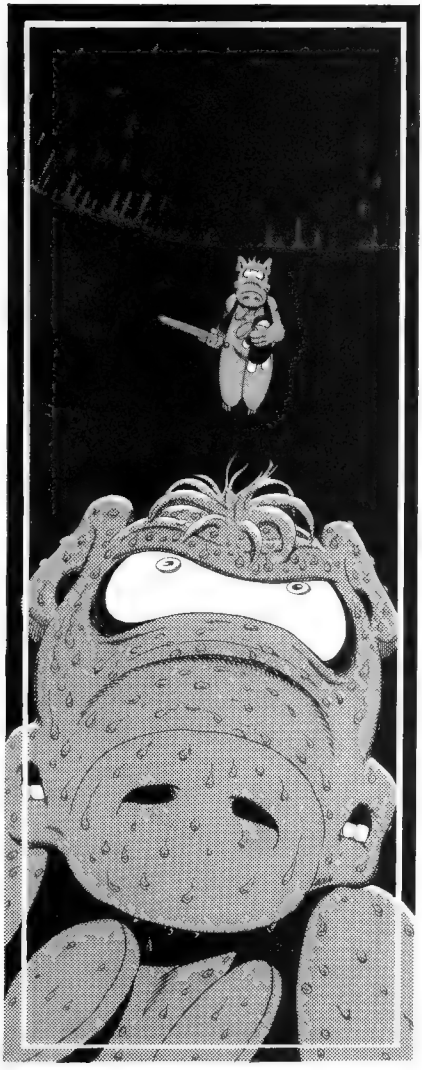


The force exerted on you is nearly unimaginable; IS unimaginable; increasing exponentially with each incremental move forward. Unexpectedly, a vision swims before your eyes. The disc is a disc no longer, but a platform of some kind, scarcely visible, viewed from its underside. Circling it is a ring of gray and insubstantial matter; tiny gaseous globules in orbit around it. What You Seek is warning you. The communication is without malice and is not a threat; rather it is a statement of fact. If you venture any closer, you will be destroyed. What You Seek is larger than anything you could imagine. Its power a terrible thing scarcely contained within it. Increasing your mass, you retreat to a safe distance and ponder this new piece of intelligence.

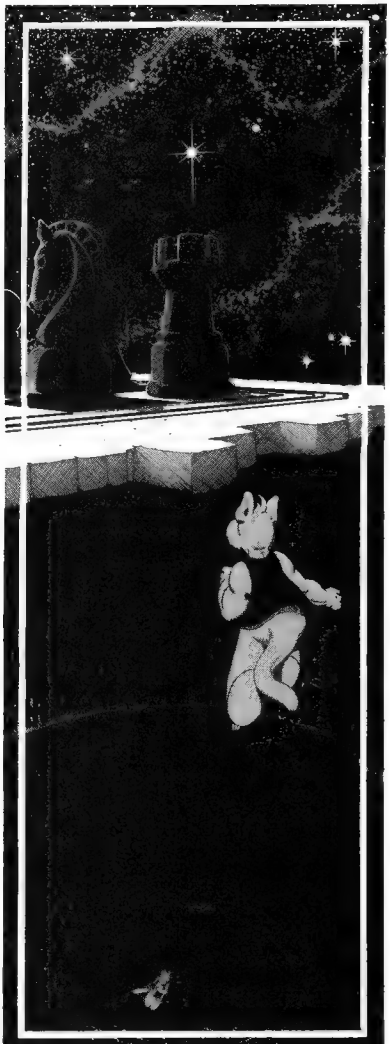




The problem is maddening. The thing you seek is so close, you feel you could reach out and touch it. You feel it is your immutable destiny to do so. You have not come this far and at such a cost merely to turn around and go back. There is a solution. Of this you are certain. Now, no longer a game of size, a game of mass, a game of density, it has become, instead a contest of wills. You focus on That Which You Seek as if your gaze alone might bring it closer or narrow the distance between you. Just as it feels as if your mind itself will explode from the strain . . .



A small duplicate of yourself forms above you, perfect in every detail. In that moment of genesis, your awareness divides. You are Cerebus and you are the small duplicate of Cerebus. You are Cerebus and you are the unimaginably large version of yourself you can sense beneath you, counterbalancing the gravitational pull of That Which You Seek. The balance of size and density and mass are shifted and redistributed by you; by your smaller and larger manifestations. You begin to rise like an air-bubble in water, able to control your progress even as you submit to the attraction of That Which You Seek. The disc grows larger. And that's the end of the story. The original story, anyway, where you reach a point within thirty-six million miles of That Which You Seek and then are frozen into a stasis once more, a mere speck scarcely visible against the disc which virtually blots out the darkness around you.



In this story, you rise to the edge of the platform and then above it. You can let your arms go limp. Missy and your sword are safe in the custody of your other self far below. The sculptured figures on the platform are familiar to you, of course. And now, it's time we meet face-to-face. You, Cerebus . . . and I, Suenteus Po . . .

WELCOME
LET'S PLAY SOME CHESS SHALL WE?

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave,

It is with great joy and anticipation that, each month, I await the newest unfoldings in the life of a certain earth-pig. Thank you for the monthly lift. And it is with even greater joy that I anticipate your impending visit to the Denver area. And, with respect, I would like to invite you and Gerhard over for dinner and/or drinks while you are in town. Though I am a regular reader of your book(s), I am pretty ignorant of the comics business so I've got no idea if it is ludicrous of me to be making such an invitation. Regardless, I gladly make it thinking that if you are going to be on the road for quite a while, a home-cooked meal might be refreshing for you and Gerhard. Of course, you would both be welcome to bring dates (or significant others (or whatever the best term might be)). All I ask is that you let me know what it is that you'd like to eat a little in advance so that I can make sure I know how to prepare it (and, please, no fish). Well, I hope you take this offer seriously and, even if you decline, I'll be seeing you at your public appearances. Again, thanks for years of pleasure and for providing a sense of continuity to an otherwise entropic sort of series of events I call a life.

Charmed, I'm sure,

Stephen Benedetti
1553 High St.,
Apt. 1
Denver, CO
USA 80218

I'm afraid that the structure of the Tour (warehouse appearances, media interviews, shop signings and Great Eastern Convention in the space of three days) means that when I'm not talking or signing autographs, I'm sleeping soundly. Thank you for the offer, though.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave,

Hope the tour is going well (or went well, depending on when you read this correspondence). Miami is just a tad far for me to travel, else I would have happily joined the flock of followers. Unfortunately, I am too bogged down with life's inane responsibilities to warrant the trip. My wife would be hesitant to leave work for two days, drive five hours, and stay in a motel room to attend the SECOND COMING, let alone just to see the creator of a comic novel (and she's even Canadian! Go figure).

Let the record show that Dave Bernstein, author of the now infamous "Jody Had . . .", and the lesser known "Jody's Dad Had . . ." (anyone who wants to see the prequel that just wasn't good enough for the single pages [or the equally less known "Life is but a Single Page" which Dave Sim called "a remarkable piece of work", but arrived too late to make Church and State {honest, I'll even send a copy of the rejection}] can send .25 cents for a copy + .29 cents for postage (.40 cents Can.) to the address below) — like I'm holding my breath on *that* happening — predicted Punisheroach a full two months before retail arrival. But predictability does not bad writing make. The semi-automatic crossbows are sheer genius. But David knew you were going to do it. He just wanted me to let you know.

While driving from one property location to another (I work for a management company [yawn]), I realized something. Why didn't anyone (besides Mick and Keef) recognize Cerebus as the Pope before now? I mean, those Cirinists were right in front of him. He sat in front of a pub in plain view for weeks, for Christ's sake! Was everyone blind? Like the guy said, "Do you know anyone else that looks like that?" Just curious.

Since you frown on common comic book fan letters, I'll give you some insight on my life. The most obscure music I listen to is *They Might Be Giants* and *Seduction of the Innocent*. My short stories seem to finally be taking off (see future issues of *Deathrealm* and *Midnight Zoo* for ex.), and New Line Cinema *claims* to be interested in *seeing* a script to my novel in progress if I ever get one or the other finished. I have a wonderful marriage 90% of the time. The other ten percent rolled around this weekend. I sat in my living room, listening to "An American Prayer", waiting to find out if I was getting a divorce. I took two handfuls of muscle relaxants (the only prescription drug in the place) and considered sending you my suicide note. I've never written you before, with the exceptions of the cover letters to my single page submissions. My wife and I patched things up, and I forced myself to vomit twenty minutes after taking the pills. I fucked my body up pretty good for a couple of days, barely made it to my precious job today. I lived to find out my big brother's best friend died of an embolism. He was 29. He was married with no kids and a job at Home Depot. The world changed not at all.

I had considered suicide as an option of dealing with life on more than one occasion as a teenager. It's scary to think you don't outgrow it. Cerebus isn't a huge part of my life. But it makes an hour or so every month very enjoyable. Worth living. It's a small piece of me you've touched, but there's also thousands of small pieces being touched by you all over (keep the thoughts clean, I'm working for a moment). You would be missed if you weren't here. I think I will be too, eventually. I'm going to try to ensure that anyway.

I didn't write this letter to say Cerebus saved my life. It didn't. I'm writing because I can. Because I can't afford real therapy. Because someone might be reading this column who needs a reason to go on. Cerebus is a small reason. And maybe making small reasons for others is another.

Thanks Dave.

Best fishes,

James Fredrick
6570 66th Ave. N.,
#107
Pinellas Park, FL
USA 34665

I think that's probably the most difficult balance that everyone has to reach; realizing that everyone is completely expendable, but that life is still very much worth living.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

I was so busy being a gushing fan boy that I forgot to ask you . . . Did you find that Nicole looks like Jaka, or is it just me?

Also, and more importantly, if Astoria were to fight Red Sophia, who would win?

Rob Lavender

It's just you, Rob. Nicole is very attractive and it was very foolish of you to break up with her, but she doesn't look like Jaka. She's shorter than Jaka for one thing.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

Here is a grassroots tip on the latest distribution trend in the comic world, and its adverse effect on Aardvark-Vanaheim. As you probably know, most comic stores currently allow regular customers who buy large numbers of titles (i.e., 6+) to pre-order their favourite comics. Once these pre-orders have been filled, the remaining issues are placed on the racks for the general public. This practice has placed an unwitting barrier between *Cerebus* and the public at large. In Calgary and Winnipeg, your *Mothers and Daughters* series is so popular with the pre-order crowd that very few *Cerebus* issues are actually reaching the rack. As I write, issues 152 and 153 have completely disappeared, if, in fact, they ever did *appear*. This means that both long term customers like myself who buy *Cerebus* only and also first-time buyers are practically shut out. This shortage, of course, negates the otherwise superb free promotional issue aimed at new subscribers. What can be done about this 'de facto' blockade? I, for one, propose to bypass the middlemen. As soon as I can find the money, I will subscribe.

SY,

Rob H.
Apt. A107–1919
University Dr. N.W.
Calgary, AB
T2N 4K3

P.S. Cheque enclosed.

We're getting a lot of subscriptions lately for that very reason. We're working on getting *Cerebus* through the distribution "bottle-neck" with the help of Capital and Diamond. The sheer volume of material being carried makes it difficult right now, as well as the increased demand for *Mothers & Daughters*. Thanks for the cheque. I bought myself a new hat with it.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

Sorry about the scribbles . . . my computer (notice how I say "my") is at work and I'm not. I'm totally bummed! I had fantasies that you were going to be at the winter N.Y. Convention. But now I realize it'll probably be July. This is all before I had seen your schedule. I promise that I'll only bring one thing for you to sign just so I can get in line to talk to you or just say hi or whatever. I would think that would be the real reason anyone would come to a convention. When I met Neil Gaiman, the guy ahead of me had 30 comics to sign and had no real idea who Neil was. Can you believe it? Some kid asked Michael Zulli to draw a sketch of Groo The Wanderer!?! and Michael was *polite* to him — Wow! I think that comic signing should be banned at conventions— that should eliminate half of the idiots.

Anyway . . .

Take Care,

Oscar Stern
New York City

I suppose. The way I look at it is that they paid for their comic books, too. If they want the thirty or forty seconds I can spend with them taken up with thirty autographs instead of a head sketch and a personalized message; well to each his own, eh? Some guys stand in line four or five times until they have their whole collection signed. The signatures are real quick and virtually unreadable, but if they're willing to spend a few hours waiting, I think I can accommodate them. When I've had enough, I say that's enough. They're pretty good about it, for the most part. They just go back to the end of the line.

★★★★★★★★★★

Howdy, Dave!

It was good to see you and Gerhard last month in Berkeley. Thanks to you both for signing my timecard.

Within a week of your visit, my old rat-friend Kei died, and I brought home two owner-orphaned year-old rats to keep Kei's surviving buddy company. I named the sweet, cream-colored, biddable rat Jaka, and the darker, suspicious, grabby rat Astoria. Astoria trounced Lum (Kei's buddy), drawing blood. Lum freaked — no rats of mine have ever drawn blood. Freaking, Lum trounced Jaka, drawing blood. Jaka's wound became infected. The vet operated. Three days later, the wound reopened and Jaka bled to death.

Rat hell.

I hope there's no moral in this.

Carolyn Hill
2410 Dwight Way #8
Berkeley CA
USA 94704

On the other hand, any story with that much bloodshed and no moral seems dangerously close to a Wolverine mini-series, doesn't it?

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

Ever since that fateful day November 22, 1963 every American has been taught the same thing. They have been taught that Astoria killed the Lion. This is known as the "lone nut" theory. I believe that such a theory immediately crumbles under even the most minute scrutiny. But how do we go about weeding through all the evidence, and emerge with the truth.

First we separate the chaff from the wheat, Cerebus' "burning" visions, the tinkerbell Cerebus immediately before she disappeared. All of these things were put into the book to do one thing, to keep us from asking the important questions. One, who had the ability to get to the pope? Two, who benefitted? Three, who had the power to cover it up?

Let's tackle the issue of Astoria being the "lone nut". She has a history of lying, this was in evidence from almost her first appearance (i.e. when she faked being drunk). So why believe her when she says she did it? She ordered the "assassin's" knife from a mail order catalog from Chicago. Why would she use this easy to trace method, when she could have gotten a knife anywhere? Details about Astoria's past were available to New Zealand newspapers hours before she was arrested by Powers. Who gave them this information?

And how about the grassy knoll? Who were those soldiers that

stopped citizens from investigating what seemed to be crossbowmen behind the fence, when the secret service says no one was assigned there?

Dan Rather. What's his problem anyway?

The three mysterious hobos. Was one of them Woody Harrelson's dad?

We have seen Groucho, Chico, and Zeppo but no Harpo. Is this because Oprah Winfrey's company is called Harpo? Oprah does quite a few strange shows. It this to "desensitize" the American public into not believing "conspiracy nuts"?

Jack Ruby. Rubies. Rubies are valuable. Gold is valuable. Cerebus wants all the gold. Cerebus was a pope. The Lion was a pope. Coincidence?

So who really had the eastern pontiff offed? My conclusion: Powers.

Mike Rogers
724 West Algonquin Apt. #5
DesPlaines, IL
USA 60016

P.S. Are P.S.'s mandatory?

P.P.S. Dave my comic shop happens to be the Moondog Mt. Prospect store, so I will be seeing you on 4/24/92 as well as 4/26/92 (Just so you'll know who I am let me describe myself. I'm six feet tall, over 300 pounds, and I'll be wearnng a Jaka dancing costume.)

Well, I'll certainly be looking forward to *that*. What about the Amazing Story of Superman Red (Jack Ruby) and Superman Blue (the corpse of President Kennedy). Lee Harvey (imaginary rabbit could only be seen by Jimmy Stewart) Oswald (imaginary rabbit stolen from creator Walt Disney). Or the license plate on Kennedy's limousine GG 300. "G" is the seventh letter of the alphabet; 77-300. *Cerebus* started in 1977 and goes to issue 300. A coincidence or a thinly-veiled publicity stunt by me when I was seven (!) years old. You (or that fellow next to you with the umbrella) be the judge.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave,

Do you get the feeling that the whole world has gone barmy and no one seems to notice? Sure, various individuals here and there, usually at the fringe of society, manage to pick up on it, but the majority of the populous seems to live without a single clue collectively.

An example from tonight's news: in some town near Springfield, Massachusetts a high school was having difficulty funding a girl's athletic team (I can't remember if it was basketball or lacrosse, but that fact is really irrelevant). A local radio station broadcast a plea for help, and in one day people brought in obscene amounts of money in an attempt to save the team.

Yet these people won't spend a penny to save education and public services. My ex-high school a few years ago pulled a similar stunt, scrounging up funding for the football team while cutting *all* computer classes. Folks here at UMass are bitching and moaning about the possibility of a soccer team being cut while shrugging their shoulders at the disintegration of education here.

I have nothing personal against sports teams or the people who participate in the sports, but don't you think that it's time to rethink our priorities?

Similarly, the government of these United States sends unthinkable lumps of cash (not to mention guns and such, but we don't do that anymore, now that Ollie was caught, do we?) to other countries while millions die of hunger, exposure and AIDS.

Good old George Bush attended a grocers' convention this week and was amazed by an electronic scanner. You know, the kind that is found at every Stop & Steal across the country and has been for many years. He was *amazed* by this as if he'd never seen one before. Was even the Great Reagan this oblivious and sheltered? And this man will probably be re-elected in November.

Courtesy of Gwendolyn Piper: there's a sign on the Coke machine in the Christian center here at UMass that reads "Redemption for cans at cashier's desk." I had no idea the Christians made it that easy. I've been turning in cans for years now. I must be guaranteed a spot at the Big Kahoona's right hand by now.

I must applaud (I never thought I'd be doing this) Marvel Comics, of all people, for finally getting Northstar out of the closet. Although I and every other reader of *Alpha* I know predicted this years ago, it's good to see it finally happened. Of course, he isn't a major hero, nor even one from the US, but at least it was done. My guess is DC will follow suit with Ayla and Vi from *Legion* if the damned homophobes don't make too much of a stink. Any chance for openly gay characters appearing with the Earth Pig any time soon? We non-heterosexual readers would love to see more recognition than Punisheroach calling the Cirinists "Lezbos". Personally, I'm waiting for the first Disney movie with a gay couple, but I may be waiting a long time.

Thanks for letting me rant, Dave. Sorry I missed you in Boston, but my friend Jonc got you to do a little "Cerebus Jam" with the little grey fellow and his character Murph. Really made his day. Have a good one, Dave. And keep up the excellent work.

Kristoff
413 Webster
UMass
Amherst, MA
USA 01003

P.S. Big Spoon!

In all fairness to the Chief Executive, he's been in the White House never-never land since 1980. What occasion would he have to go out to a 7–11 and pick up a loaf of bread and some corn chips (for instance)? I only got a banking machine card last year and it wasn't until this summer that I found out you could use it in *any* banking machine *anywhere*. Try enthusing about that to people who live in the real world and see what kind of reaction you get.

I don't suppose "Eat Tasty Semi-Automatic Death You Dildo Jockies" was what you were looking for, was it?

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Family of the Aardvark—

I just read issue #151, and (oddly enough) the letters section of that issue. There was a letter from a guy calling himself the Albino who wrote in to tell you about his newfound Aardvark-Mania. And I figured if he could, I could.

I was introduced to *Cerebus* by a very special friend in kind of a round-a-bout way. About three months ago, he started reminiscing about his by gone comic collecting days, and mentioned *Cerebus* (about a zillion times) as his favourite. He kept saying he was going to start buying them again, but never got around to it. (like me he is a pro at procrastination.) Finally I decided I would buy him some of his stupid comics (I said then — I have since changed my

tune . . .) for Christmas. What he got was all of the *Melmoth* issues. I read the first few, in an effort to share his enthusiasm for the little gray dude, but gave up because I just didn't get it. He was dumfounded! How could anyone NOT be impressed by that artwork and amazing writing? Not being a quitter, he ordered me a bound copy of *Jaka's Story*. (Immediately after which the Army shipped him and his comic books off to Korea). Well, I read *Jaka's Story* almost straight through, and THEN I was hooked! So now, without his collection around to offer me Cerebus sustenance, I have had to start buying my own. I figure I'll start with #1 (Reprints—since that's all there is to be had) and #151 simultaneously. That way even if I don't get my first goal of the first 150 issues, I can at least get the last 150 issues! By the way — these sell out awfully fast. Can I order a subscription?

So there's my story. Maybe boring to a few people, but life's rough. At least I got to ask for my subscription.

And there is more good news (assuming that my addition to the Aardvark-loving fold is good news . . .), as well. My very special friend has now re-acquired the bug and is on a *Cerebus* binge once again, never to leave again! He gave me a list of the issues he is lacking so I can send them to Korea, where probably there is nothing to do but re-read his whole collection anyway. (Maybe he'll send an address soon, so I can send them to him).

Your new friend,

Teri Centner

P.S. I read issue #151 the day after I read issue #5. It was one of those things that make you go hmm.

Welcome. We'd prefer that you buy *Cerebus* in your local comic store, but the subscription info is on the inside back cover if they're just no help at all.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave:

A few words about Mr. Art Monk from Quebec:

1) He is not a wide receiver for the Washington Redskins.
2) In my opinion, he either
   a) is totally/partially ignorant of the contents of his own mind, or
   b) has honestly and truthfully NEVER had a rape fantasy.

Judge not, Mr. Monk.

Andrew Williams
11912 Renwood Land
Rockville, MD
USA 20852–4343

P.S. Word to Alyx Millan: *Aardvark Comment* is a forum for *EVERYONE — NOT* just feminist bashers, *NOT* just pro-choice, *NOT* just drug legalization. Find me a form more open than this and I'll start bombarding *them* with letters too.

P.P.S. Sorry as usual for the handwriting. The French have a phrase for it, "backstairs talk" — all the things you should have said which come to you as you walk down the stairs to leave.

I thought it was kind of a long commute from Quebec to RFK stadium.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave:

Just thought I would let you know that I loved *Cerebus* #154 (The long-awaited return of the 'Roach! At last! Yeeha! Yowza!), I loved the *Free Cerebus* (for a second there, when I saw the title of the giveaway, I was under the bizarre impression that Cerebus was imprisoned somewhere and that this comic was an Amnesty International publication or something), *and* that there exists out there another Cerebus. Photo proof enclosed. You will see that this is a picture taken off my TV set of a Nintendo game in progress (it's a tad over-exposed but dammit Jim I'm a doctor, not a photographer and oops, I'm not even a doctor, so there ya go). This is the game "Final Fantasy" (1990), which features a whole bunch of nasty monsters in a D&D-type role-playing game, and one of the beasts your party encounters is something called a Cerebus (which looks more like a big ugly horse than a little aardvark). Note their spelling: It *isn't* a Cerberus, and *is* a Cerebus. So, are you proud and humbled or is there gonna be a lawsuit?

Anyway, that's about it for now. Keep up the great work!

Yours extremely truly,

Conrad P. Felber
1319 Rose Marie Ave.
Sudbury, Ontario
P3A 4E4

P.S. I might as well also alert you to the presence of what is a minor but still potentially troublesome typo, which can be found just before the copyright notice on the inside front cover of issue #154 . . . your address includes the postal code as N2G 4R4 when, of course, we all know that is incorrect. You might like to get that fixed, eh?

Actually I was thinking of introducing a big ugly horse character and calling him Nintendo.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave and Gerhard,

Hi! It's been a while since I've written, and I thought in the interests of variety, I'd divide the letter between a serious topic and a fun one. It'll be a lopsided division, but, that's how it is sometimes.

The "serious" topic might as well be feminism and related issues, which continue to roam like a beast in motion in Aardvark Comment. Because really clear thinking is so often lacking in this area, I though I'd give my list of:

PRINCIPLES FOR DEALING WITH VISIONS OF SOCIAL INJUSTICE

1) Work to integrate new knowledge with previous knowledge. In the real world, facts are related to each other in a complex fashion. If we try to leave our knowledge in the form of disconnected bits, each standing independent of the rest, our "knowledge" will not be accurate. A simple rule, but it's too often ignored. For example, many people accept the claim that in America, a woman receives 59% of what a man receives for doing the same work. The claim is used to induce guilt, to make people lose confidence in the process of voluntary exchange, and to expand government controls. But when we try to connect the claim to other things we know, we get a different perspective. For instance, we know that the (male) employers — who are supposed to be discriminating against (female) employees — work to achieve their self-interest by cutting labor costs whenever possible. The "59%" claim would require us to believe that an employer would pay up to 70% more simply to get a given piece of work done by a male employee. Even if the employer was that needlessly generous to men, or so consumed by ideology, a waste so large would be fatal to any business which happened to have more men on the payroll than its competitors. Far smaller cost differences have sent innumerable businesses into bankruptcy.

It turns out that the difference is not between men and women, but between married women and everyone else. There is a close parity of income between men who never marry and women of the same description — which has been true for decades. Because of the way men and women choose to divide child raising and domestic responsibilities, becoming a wife and mother reduces a woman's earning potential, while becoming a husband and father does the opposite for a man. One may question the traditional division of child raising and home responsibilities between men and women, but this is very different from asserting widespread employer discrimination. More importantly, the principle of integrating our knowledge allowed us to first question, and then to reject as false, a widely-held incorrect view.

2) Reject any statistics that you can't validate (i.e., link to observation and your other knowledge.) One letter in 154 asserted that women, while working 2/3 of the world's total working hours, receive one tenth of the world's income. We aren't told who calculated those numbers, by what standards the data was calculated, or what information was omitted. Even if completely accurate, these particular stats are misleading in two different ways. First, by lumping all of the women (and men) in the world together, the numbers ignore the difference between political systems: the differences in opportunities that a woman might have to improve her well-being in the industrialized, rights-oriented nations as against the third world is obliterated. Second, when the husband is affluent, the wife is not living in poverty, whatever her income percentage may be. The fact that the man's name alone may appear on the paycheck can't even tell us who formally spends the money — much less in whose collective interest it is spent.

When statistics are used in this manner, a person has no way to relate the numbers meaningfully to any evidence, and no way to connect them with his other knowledge. Since you have no way to process the numbers, they destroy your ability to distinguish truth from falsehood. If you have no means to evaluate a claim, you should dismiss it as completely arbitrary. The onus of proof is on the person who asserts something positive; it's not up to you to prove a negative in a case where no evidence has been offered for a positive claim. So simply discard it, exactly as if the speaker had said, "Pluto is composed entirely of Rum Raisin Ice Cream." (See the end of the letter for where to turn to evaluate my own statement.)

3) Beware of "rationalism" — which I'm using here in a non-traditional sense to mean "taking a plausible-sounding idea and deducing conclusions from it without reference to facts." An example of rationalism is the idea that different groups of people would be evenly or randomly distributed (in income, professions, amount of education, etc.) if it weren't for institutional barriers and other evils of "society." There is no evidence for this idea and overwhelming evidence against it. People from different ethnic groups (and sexes) are not prepared to make the same investments to achieve the same results. People from different immigrant groups do not marry at the same age range; they don't choose the same mixture of subjects in their college majors; they don't even listen to the same music. These can't be discrimination because each person makes his own decisions for himself. Nor do these differences necessarily reflect the influence of the surrounding majority. There are numerous examples of ethnic minorities who suffered hatred, violence and discrimination, and who yet had better education and higher incomes than their oppressors: The Jews in Europe and the Chinese minorities in Southeast Asian countries, for example. I don't (and no one needs to) believe in genetic superiority of some group — an obviously racist premise. Nor am I saying that someone is at fault. But there are other reasons for differing results between groups than either discrimination or innate superiority/inferiority: How old are the people in a given group on average? What particular values are emphasized in their cultural tradition? Do they live in a high-income or low-income part of the country?

Unfortunately, the "equal/random distribution" idea is believed — and when someone finds a lopsided statistic somewhere, that is taken to be proof of wrongdoing. It's taken as proof, even though no one knows, or could know, what the standard for "correct" distribution could be in any given case. Discrimination still exists and is harmful, but the idea of a statistical baseline from which to measure discrimination is a myth, not an established fact.

4) Beware of terms which destroy mental clarity by packing opposites together. Ayn Rand called such terms "anti-concepts," which is the only attempt I know of to give an actual name to the phenomenon. Mark Russell hit it on the head with his letter in #154, with his illustration that "feminism" embraces two groups with opposite characteristics: The "equalicists" and the "Dalyans," in his lingo. In the same way, "Environmentalist" now embraces both those with a rational concern for the environment as a means to preserve human life, and those who believe that human life is evil and should be abolished. "Civil Rights" now seems to mean not equality before the law, but equality of outcomes — i.e., government mandated preferential treatment of some groups. "Diversity" is a term posturing as meaning "varying traditions and philosophies" but it actually designates people sharing a singular outlook: a hostility towards the west and a contempt for western concepts such as science, technology, freedom, individualism, and objectivity. There's no real way to avoid these terms, which are in common use. But we can be aware that they're present and know that they pack opposites together, and so are harmful to thinking and communicating. And we now have to go to the trouble of defining things that should have been perfectly clear — so that people know what we're referring to.

(Thomas Sowell is a great writer to investigate in exploring these subjects. His book *Civil Rights: Rhetoric Or Reality* is an oasis of clear writing and cogent reasoning on that very unreasonable subject. He also has a regular column in *Forbes* magazine. Leonard Peikoff's recent book on Ayn Rand's philosophy elaborates the epistemological principles covered above, and is valuable.)

Okay, now the fun stuff: I recall that someone asked what to say to Gerhard at the tour stops. Why not talk to him about what he does all day — drawing? I did at the Boston stop, and I think it worked pretty well. (He makes a sharp distinction between *drawing*, which he enjoys talking about, and *comics*, which he doesn't, according to you, Dave). Our gabbing fit right in with the "issue-in-progress" xeroxes you had on display, (fascinating to see an issue of *Cerebus*

"under construction") and I really enjoyed hearing how, for example he goes about constructing complex perspectives like the "gold sphere" page in 155. (I was inspired enough to try my own difficult (for me) perspective in a story I'm working on when I got home.) Talking also led in nicely to other tales from behind the scenes, such as when Gerhard described working on a page in *Jaka's Story*, getting intensely into it, drawing the mechanism of a clock, then stopping and asking,

"Uh, Dave — did they have *clocks* then?" and the only answer could have been, "well, guess they do now."

(This was in #131, right?)

Needless to say, t'was great meeting you both, and I'll try not to have so many questions, next time.

Best,

Larry Dudock
9 Cornwallis Road
Setauket, NY
USA 11733

Well—that's a lot of the problem *I've* found with rhetorical feminism. With a couple of notable exceptions, it's been my experience that they stop listening past the "sound byte" format. I only debate feminism these days with women who can argue sequentially and rationally and who don't change the subject when I'm winning.

★★★★★★★★★★

Hello again Dave,

This one is intended for publication if you so deem it fit. (Did that make any sense?)

Mothers and Daughters continues to move along at a nice click. All secrets are revealed in the end, are they Dave? Time will tell. You sounded pretty strung out the last time I talked to you, hope the tour isn't leaving you spread too thin. We need you amongst us Dave, take care of yourself, OK? Allright, allright enough of the 'hovering mother' shit . . .

Enclosed is the questions for the first issue of the newsletter. (Complete and return as soon as you can . . .) Also is copies of the story that Mike Bannon drew (and I wrote) for the 'Freezer' book. Looks pretty sweet to me. Hey, can you mention the NW tour promotion-thing that Randy and I are doing? (The same way you mention the 'Bay of Earth Pigs' shirt?) If not, (and you run this . . .) interested members of the NW faction of Cerebus can contact me at the address below.

Ok, enough pleasantries, let's cut to the chase. There's been a lot of discussion about 'rape' and *Rape* in the letters column lately and I feel the necessity to throw in my bit on the subject.

Approximately two years ago a very dear (female) friend of mine was raped. For anyone out there still waffling on a definition, I'll give you mine. That means she was forced, physically, against her will to have sex with someone. Ok, that was two years ago, with therapy, the wounds should have started to heal and this would be history, right?

Wrong.

First off, she knew her attacker. Worse, she trusted him enough before the rape to give him her home address and phone number. (She attend a college in another town, and *no*, by 'worse' I am *not* saying that she in any way deserved, wanted, or instigated it.) The problem of the situation is this. He is a sociopath. He lives to make people hurt. Two years after the fact he continues to harass her by phone *at least* three times a week. Ok, you say, have her change her phone number. Can't. The dormitory she lives in is set up in such a way that the phones are linked to a single line and cannot be changed. 'Ok, then have the police trace the calls and nail him.' Again, it's not that easy. One, he lives in New York, and she in Idaho. (That's right, he's doing this *long distance*.) Two, she and the police have more than enough evidence to nail him on the rape charge (fluid samples, etc.). There's a reason why they haven't. His father happens to be the vice president of one of *the* major pharmaceutical companies in America. He invented many of the things you take for the common cold. That means money. *Big* fucking-time money. Anyone happen to know what happened in the Kennedy Rape Trial? How about the Clarence Thomas harassment hearings? Can you say 'Get away scott free, and come back for more?' Ok, then how about a restraining order at the very least? Ok, fine. Keep in mind we're talking about a guy that attempted to outrun three police vehicles on a motorcycle, at speeds exceeding 100 mph because . . . he didn't want to get a speeding ticket. Now, do you think a court order is going to mean much to this asshole? My apologies to everyone if the above is kinda jumbled and hard to understand, but that would be an accurate assessment of my feelings at this point. I do what I can to help. Supply comfort, answer the phone when I'm visiting. (He hangs up when a man answers, typical 'bad ass', can't confront anyone who might actually be a threat to him . . .) But it doesn't seem to really matter. I can't stop him from pulling this shit, and that . . . is where *I'm* at.

So, what's the point of me telling all of you this? Partly to get it off my chest because every day this leaves me with steel bands around my neck and lead in my stomach, but also because I want to tell everyone. (Well, the *males* in the audience . . .) that if you force someone into a clinch, and they don't *want* to be in that clinch, well *that* is rape. That is a person that feels and dreams, cares and hates the same as *you*.

And you've just left them an open wound that may never heal.

Go beat off in a corner, slam your dick in a door, go for a walk, just *don't* let your anger and sexual frustration out on another person. They don't want it, and they sure as *hell* don't deserve it. (No matter what you might convince yourself of you poxy little shits . . .) Ok, end of tirade, thanks for listening.

On a lighter note, it's an odd bit of synchronicity to notice Tony Seybert's address on Franklin since I was living on Franklin two years ago. (Corner of Highland and Franklin, behind the Methodist church if you want to know where . . .) More letter-related stuff; Where's the Ranger? Remember the letter I sent a while back about the need for 'Art Monk's'? Well, there on page 24 of issue 154 is evidence that I, once again, *do* know what I'm talking about . . .

Everyone get your membership in to the newsletter, hope to see some of you at the Seattle and Portland stops . . .

Back to you Dave,

Rantz A. Hoseley
1615 SE Bleasner Dr. #64
Pullman, WA
USA 99163
Rantz Hoseley

I think it's time to face the fact that those guys are a breed apart. The notion that somehow they can be reasoned with by the rest of the members of their gender is a mis-apprehension. In the same way that

you can have all the Drug Awareness Programs you want, ten per cent of the population will still end up permanently addicted. I'm not happy about it, but I like to think I recognize an unsolvable problem when I see it.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

There's something daunting about writing to 'Aardvark Comment' these days. Back in my wild youth, I felt I could write to you without a second thought, let my thoughts fly about anything, even sometimes write about *Cerebus*, it didn't matter, because this was 'Aardvark Comment' and within those pages all could be said.

Now I'm older. I'm married. I have two cats. I am no longer a struggling art student. (Not that my university days ever got me anything other than a few magic moments in stranger's bedrooms and providing me with an impressive library of books that I doubt I'll ever even open again. "Is that 'Religion and the Decline of Magic' on your bookshelf?" "Why yes, it is. I disagree with some of it's postulations, but on the whole, it is a splendid little read." "Oh, my, you must be clever.") And I know very little about the alternative music scene. I mean, *Jane's Addiction* came and went before I even saw their first video. How passe can a man be?

I don't know much about feminism, other than I don't much care for those women who see themselves as the personal saviours of all womankind. But that's not just for feminists: that goes for anyone who thinks their personal beliefs, and the abrasive application of those beliefs, will somehow save the world and damn the unworthy. So really, you see, Dave, I don't have much to say.

Oh enough of this self-pity shit. I was reading *Cerebus* when a lot of these kids were still watching 'Polka Dot Door'. I'm a long time fan, damn it! I have just as much right to blather in 'Aardvark Comment' as anyone, even if I don't think the sole female in *Sonic Youth* is a kind of inner-city sex-goddess, that *The Replacements* actually have something to say, or that ponytails on men are a really deep sociological statement. I will be heard!

(Back to 'Polka Dot Door' for a sec, Dave: Have you ever noticed that whenever Polka-Roo appears, one of the hosts is gone? And no-one ever thinks this is odd? Can't these hosts put two and two together, and figure out Polka-Roo's identity? Or has playing in the sandbox with Bear and Marigold sapped their ability to reason? It's a Canadian mystery, and it's time we bent our scientific knowledge to solving this. Maybe if we did, Quebec would stay in Confederation.)

Since this is a Canadian comic, I think, just for fun, we should go out of our way now and again here in 'Aardvark Comment' to mystify the more international readers with references that only we Canadians can get. Especially the Americans. When I used to read old copies of *Beano* and *Whizzer* and whatever the hell those English comics were called that my Grandmother would bring back from the U.K. for me when I was but a tyke, I loved mystifying over those references directed at the British reader. I mean, just what the hell was 'Blue Peter'? Was that a danger one faced while urinating outdoors?) It deepened my appreciation of the books, and added to the flavour of their uniqueness.

So anyway, some strictly Canadian stuff that few non-Canadians will get:

FIRST TOPIC: What MuchMusic VJ would you most like to have a candlelight dinner with, discussing quietly books and foreign films, then retire to a penthouse apartment to make slow torrid love with while listening to *Boston's* first album?

A. Erica Ehm
B. Natalie Richard
C. Ziggy Lorenc
D. Monika Deol (she's not a VJ, per se but she works at MuchMusic, so close enough)

A difficult choice, I must say. I'd be tempted to choose Erica, since I'm a sucker for long brown hair and brown eyes, not to mention that she has a body that would give a dog a bone, but then there's that French mystique that surrounds Natalie that makes me think of the morning after, of how her soft accent, coupled with the way the early morning sunlight would play across her hair, that would be somehow more magical than anything the previous night had to offer. So, Dave, who would you like to go out with?

(Oh, and the *Boston* album is a MUST. It makes even the most mundane encounter somehow more unearthly. If unavailable, *Roxy Music's Avalon* is a second choice, but only if it's on cassette.)

SECOND TOPIC: In *Cerebus* 155, I noticed a character called Copps. Is that after Sheila? Just asking, as a fellow Canadian. And what did you think of her fall wardrobe in the House? Very fetching, I must say.

To end: Dave, a long time ago, you said that if you ever went on tour again, that you would visit Bruno Andreacchi here in the Conservative Fortress of London, Ontario. I have it in print. Now, I'm not holding you to your promise or anything, because I know what a busy man you are, but sometime before 300 it would be great if you stopped by. His store is called *Nostalgia Land*, by the way, now, not *Bid Time Return*. That store has been taken by the Enemy. I promise I'll buy some coffee and doughnuts, and we'll all sit down and discuss the joys and wonders of X-MEN continuity. I assume you like Boston Cremes.

Yours, etc.

Sean Twist
216-500 Springbank Drive
London, Ontario
N6J 4G6

I've always thought Sheila Copps must have the hardest time colour-coordinating those eyebrows with anything.

★★★★★★★★★★

CEREBUS '92
US TOUR
SPONSOR STORES

MIAMI
Super Heroes Unlimited
May 2 — 1 pm

KANSAS CITY
Clint's Books, Comics & Video
May 30 — 1 pm

MINNEAPOLIS
Dreamhaven Books & Comics
June 5 — 1 pm

WHAT'S GOING ON?
THE LITTLE EARTH-PIG SAID HE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY WE WANT TO TAKE BACK THE NIGHT.
80-90% INCREASE IN VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN OVER LAST YEAR
3 TO 4 MILLION WOMEN BATTERED EACH YEAR
A WOMAN IS RAPED EVERY SIX MINUTES IN THE U.S.
U.S.A. RAPE RATE 13 TIMES HIGHER THAN BRITAIN'S
MARCH 6TH FOURTEEN WOMEN KILLED IN MONTREAL
YOU'RE CUTE WHEN YOU'RE SELF-RIGHTEOUSLY INDIGNANT TRINA
BESIDES, IT WAS SOME GUY WHO SAID THE NIGHT NEVER BELONGED EXCLUSIVELY TO WOMEN
NOT CEREBUS
CEREBUS IS A FEMINIST
WHY DON'T YOU BUY CEREBUS DINNER AND WE'LL TALK ABOUT IT...
TAKE BACK THE NIGHT
Trina Robbins

It's true! It's true! Some of my best friends are feminists. Pictured above, Gerhard, Trina Robbins and I prepare to auction the benefit jam piece (left) at the San Francisco Tour stop in January. I'd really like to thank Trina for coming through on such short notice. She even promised to take Cerebus out for dinner at some time in the not especially foreseeable future.

(photo by Alan Hose)

CEREBUS

SUBSCRIPTIONS

CEREBUS MONTHLY 1 YEAR/12 ISSUES **$45.00**

20 PAGES OF STORY PLUS LETTERS PAGES AND OCCASIONAL BACK UP FEATURES. BLACK & WHITE WITH COLOUR COVER. PRICE INCLUDES POSTAGE. PLEASE INDICATE WITH WHICH ISSUE NUMBER YOU'D LIKE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION TO BEGIN. OUTSIDE CANADA & U.S. ADD $12.00 PER YEAR FOR EXTRA POSTAGE. IN CANADA ADD 7% GST.

REPRINT VOLUMES

CEREBUS 536 PAGES, SOFT COVER	REPRINTS CEREBUS 1 TO CEREBUS 25	**$25.00** PLUS POSTAGE
HIGH SOCIETY 512 PAGES, SOFT COVER	REPRINTS CEREBUS 26 TO CEREBUS 50	**$25.00** PLUS POSTAGE
CHURCH & STATE Vol. I 592 PAGES, SOFT COVER	REPRINTS CEREBUS 52 TO CEREBUS 80	**$30.00** PLUS POSTAGE
CHURCH & STATE Vol. II 630 PAGES, SOFT COVER	REPRINTS CEREBUS 81 TO CEREBUS 111	**$30.00** PLUS POSTAGE
JAKA'S STORY 488 PAGES, SOFT COVER	REPRINTS CEREBUS 114 TO CEREBUS 136	**$25.00** PLUS POSTAGE
MELMOTH 258 PAGES, SOFT COVER	REPRINTS CEREBUS 139 TO CEREBUS 150	**$17.00** PLUS POSTAGE

INCLUDE $3.00 PER BOOK FOR POSTAGE & HANDLING.
CANADIAN CUSTOMERS PLEASE ADD 7% GST.

AMOUNTS QUOTED ARE IN CANADIAN FUNDS. VISA OR MASTERCARD WILL BILL YOU THE EQUIVALENT IN YOUR DOMESTIC CURRENCY AT THE BILLING DATE RATE OF EXCHANGE.

CALL 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. E.S.T.

(519) AREA CODE

VISA **576-7820** OR **576-0610** master charge

OR FAX **576-0955**

INCLUDE: NAME, ADDRESS, DAY-TIME PHONE NUMBER, VISA OR MASTERCARD NUMBER & EXPIRATION DATE OR SEND CERTIFIED CHEQUE/MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO:

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM INC.
BOX 1674, STATION C, KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

MAY 3 MIAMI
PARK PLAZA HOTEL, PALMETTO EXPRESSWAY & NW 103RD ST.

MAY 31 KANSAS CITY
MARRIOTT, METCALF AVE. IN OVERLAND PARK

JUNE 7 MINNEAPOLIS
MARRIOTT BLOOMINGTON, I-495 AT CEDAR AVE.

JUNE 21 ALBANY
HOLIDAY INN, 205 WOLF RD.

JULY 12 INDIANAPOLIS
SHERATON, 7701 EAST 42ND ST.

JULY 26 DETROIT
MARRIOTT, 200 W. BIG BEAVER, TROY, MI.

AUGUST 23 ATLANTA
CASTLEGATE HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTRE

TO BE ANNOUNCED:

CLEVELAND

HOUSTON

NEW YORK

PHOENIX

PORTLAND

SEATTLE

WASHINGTON

Contact
GREAT EASTERN CONVENTIONS
(908) 788-6845
for details

COMICS
Aardvark annals
David Sim's Cerebus strives to achieve epic status
by Gary Sueman
TICKETPRO
NO REFUND
NO EXCHANGE
SERVICE CHARGE NOT REFUNDABLE
SPONGE BOY
23.
FLAMING CARROT'S little buddy SPONGE BOY was kidnapped by the bandit moons during his birthday party picnic but is back with us now since he mysteriously popped up in an issue of CEREBUS THE AARDVARK.
THE 57
PARK PLAZA HOTEL
We have it all, near it all.
Legions of
SUPERHEROS
COMICS, SCI-FICTION/FANTASY, GAMES, HOBBY SUPPLIES AND MEMORABILIA
168 SCHOOL STREET
EVERETT, MA 02149
(617) 394-9001
PETER A. NAPOLITANO
MICHAEL GROGAN, JR.
MUSIC QUEST
446 GRAFTON ST.
RT. 122 SOUTH
WORCESTER, MA.
"NEW AND USED-BUY AND SELL"
ROGER ANDERSON
508-754-9597
104 FM
WBCN
RED & WHITE
24 HOURS • RADIO DISPATCHED
BOSTON: 742
SO. BOSTON 268-2300 • DORC
JAMAICA PL. 524-2300 • MATTAP
E. BOSTON 567-9000 • BRIGHTO
• CHARLESTOWN 242-2300
BUSINESS ACCOUNTS • PACKAGE
PUB
Cheer
HAMPSHIRE HOUSE, Beacon
LITERATE AND SOPHISTICATED: Cerebus was one of the first examples that comics could be a serious forum for adult themes.
TOM LINEHAN
CARTOONIST
COMIC ART
CARICATURES
Dear Dave -
Tried the Park Plaza first then came here at 8:20. You weren't in. If you still want to do an interview, call after
1992-02-25

CEREBUS

SUBSCRIPTIONS

CEREBUS MONTHLY 1 YEAR/12 ISSUES **$45.00**

20 PAGES OF STORY PLUS LETTERS PAGES AND OCCASIONAL BACK UP FEATURES. BLACK & WHITE WITH COLOUR COVER. PRICE INCLUDES POSTAGE. PLEASE INDICATE WITH WHICH ISSUE NUMBER YOU'D LIKE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION TO BEGIN. OUTSIDE CANADA & U.S. ADD $12.00 PER YEAR FOR EXTRA POSTAGE. IN CANADA ADD 7% GST.

REPRINT VOLUMES

CEREBUS 536 PAGES, SOFT COVER	REPRINTS CEREBUS 1 TO CEREBUS 25	**$25.00** PLUS POSTAGE
HIGH SOCIETY 512 PAGES, SOFT COVER	REPRINTS CEREBUS 26 TO CEREBUS 50	**$25.00** PLUS POSTAGE
CHURCH & STATE Vol. I 592 PAGES, SOFT COVER	REPRINTS CEREBUS 52 TO CEREBUS 80	**$30.00** PLUS POSTAGE
CHURCH & STATE Vol. II 630 PAGES, SOFT COVER	REPRINTS CEREBUS 81 TO CEREBUS 111	**$30.00** PLUS POSTAGE
JAKA'S STORY 488 PAGES, SOFT COVER	REPRINTS CEREBUS 114 TO CEREBUS 136	**$25.00** PLUS POSTAGE
MELMOTH 258 PAGES, SOFT COVER	REPRINTS CEREBUS 139 TO CEREBUS 150	**$17.00** PLUS POSTAGE

INCLUDE $3.00 PER BOOK FOR POSTAGE & HANDLING.
CANADIAN CUSTOMERS PLEASE ADD 7% GST.

AMOUNTS QUOTED ARE IN CANADIAN FUNDS. VISA OR MASTERCARD WILL BILL YOU THE EQUIVALENT IN YOUR DOMESTIC CURRENCY AT THE BILLING DATE RATE OF EXCHANGE.

CALL 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. E.S.T.

(519) AREA CODE

VISA 576-7820 OR 576-0610 master charge

OR FAX 576-0955

INCLUDE: NAME, ADDRESS, DAY-TIME PHONE NUMBER, VISA OR MASTERCARD NUMBER & EXPIRATION DATE OR SEND CERTIFIED CHEQUE/MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO:

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM INC.
BOX 1674, STATION C, KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

REPRINT VOLUME discounts for COMIC BOOK STORES

total retail
$300.00 – $600.00
30% OFF

total retail
$601.00 – $900.00
40% OFF

total retail
$901.00 or more
50% OFF